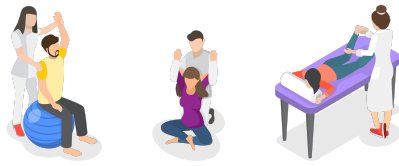


Ask a PT



We are starting a new regular column to answer your questions about physical therapy, occupational therapy, speech therapy and massage therapy. Send your questions to us at Nebraska.Polio.Survivors@outlook.com. Our first question comes from our recent NPSA survey. These Q's and A's will be posted in their entirety on the website.



QUESTION: I am hunting for a power travel chair that will do uneven ground and hills but is narrow (22" or less) so I can continue to go to small shops. Do you have any advice on that?

ANSWER FROM: Vicky McHugh, PT, DPT, Board Certified Clinical Specialist in Pediatric Physical Therapy (ABPTS), [Key Complete Therapies](#).

For many wheelchair users, the search for a power chair feels like an impossible trade-off: the chairs that handle hills and rough terrain tend to be wide and bulky, while the narrow chairs that fit through boutique shop doorways often lack the muscle for real-world terrain. But the good news is that that gap is closing and with the right guidance, you can find a chair that handles both.

Before you fall in love with specs on a website take one step further to find one you can trial~ the best wheelchair is the one that fits you — not just the doorway. Here's what to consider as essential when selecting a power chair:

Key Tips for Your Search for a New Power Wheelchair

- Motor power matters for hills: Higher wattage motors (500W and above) provide more power for hills and rough surfaces. (WheelerZone.com)
- Tire type matters for uneven ground: Pneumatic (air-filled) tires provide superior shock absorption and traction, and larger diameter wheels with deeper tread patterns offer better grip on loose surfaces. (WheelerZone.com)
- Braking is a safety must: Electromagnetic brakes that engage automatically when you release the joystick are essential for preventing rollbacks on slopes.
- Real-world range is less than advertised: Factors like hills, rough terrain and frequent stops can reduce range by 20–30% compared to ideal conditions.
- Try before you buy: If possible, visit a local mobility/durable medical equipment dealer to test drive.

Understanding the 22-Inch Challenge

Standard power wheelchairs typically run 25–27 inches wide. Getting under 22 inches while maintaining outdoor capability is a genuine engineering challenge, and it narrows your field significantly. However, there are a handful of purpose-built models that have solved this problem. Find additional information about **Top Power Chairs to Consider** on our **website** and read additional information from **Key Complete Therapies** go to the **NPSA** [Resources page](https://www.nebraskapoliosurvivors.com/resources.asp): <https://www.nebraskapoliosurvivors.com/resources.asp>

DISCLAIMER: NPSA offers this program as an educational resource but in no way is a substitute for any type of medical or allied health care by your personal healthcare provider. Our volunteer providers can only make suggestions that you, in turn, will need to discuss with your healthcare provider. Interactions in writing, verbally or by video cannot replace the value of an in-person evaluation.

Top Power Chairs to Consider

1. Pride Mobility Jazzy EVO 613

This is the standout match for users who need narrow width without sacrificing outdoor performance. The Jazzy EVO 613 measures just 22 inches wide at the base with a 22-inch turning radius, making it equally at home in a crowded antique shop and on a sloped neighborhood sidewalk. Pride's patented Active-Trac® Suspension smooths out uneven surfaces, while the Mid-Wheel 6® Technology delivers a tight turn. Range reaches up to 21 miles on a lithium battery, and it may qualify for Medicare reimbursement. Available in 16", 18" and 20" seat widths with memory foam.

pridemobility.com/jazzy-power-chairs/jazzy-evo-613-li/

2. WHILL Model F

Sleek, thoughtfully engineered, and travel-ready, the WHILL Model F handles uneven terrain and obstacles up to 1.4 inches high, manages inclines up to 10°, and offers a 12.4-mile range. Its lithium-ion battery is airline-approved — a plus for traveling users. Armrest height and controller placement are adjustable, and it folds quickly for vehicle transport. Confirm exact width for your specific configuration with the manufacturer. www.whill.inc/us/whill-model-f/

3. GoldSeason 22" Electric Wheelchair

A budget-friendly all-terrain option for those who want genuine capability without the premium price tag. Built from aerospace-grade steel and supporting up to 330 pounds, it features a 500W motor capable of tackling slopes, grass and gravel, with a 15-mile range and tool-free folding for easy transport. Safety lights and adjustable armrests round out the feature set.

The Jazzy EVO 613 is a standout recommendation highlighting narrow, powerful, great suspension and widely supported.

A physical or occupational therapist can assist in meeting with a wheelchair vendor to test any chair in your real environment before committing. That means your driveway, your neighborhood sidewalks, or out in the fields. So, don't skip this step. They can also help navigate the application and paperwork for getting insurance coverage, if the chair is an eligible product.

Key Complete Therapies, founded and owned by Vicky McHugh, PT, DPT, is a multidisciplinary rehabilitation practice specializing in the care of individuals across the life span with complex neurological needs. Located in Omaha and serving the community for 19 years, the practice delivers highly personalized, evidence based therapy designed to support long term function, independence, and quality of life.

The clinic provides an integrated team approach, offering:

- Physical Therapy – gait, balance, mobility, fall prevention, strength, movement retraining, and pain management strategies.
- Occupational Therapy – adaptive techniques, functional independence training, upper extremity rehabilitation, home safety strategies, and energy conservation methods for chronic neurological conditions.
- Speech Language Therapy – cognitive communication support, swallowing management, voice and speech rehabilitation, and education for patients and caregivers.
- Massage Therapy- medical based massage therapy for alleviating physiological basis of pain and offering comprehensive healing.

Dr. McHugh is widely recognized for her ability to navigate complex medical histories and her expertise in treating individuals with conditions such as post polio syndrome, stroke, Parkinson's disease, MS, spinal cord injury, brain injury, Muscular Dystrophy, Cerebral Palsy, Spina Bifida, Down Syndrome, Autism and other chronic or progressive neuromuscular disorders. Her practice is grounded in collaborative care, partnering closely with physicians, trainers, and other specialists to ensure cohesive, patient centered treatment.

With nearly two decades of private practice experience in Omaha, Key Complete Therapies has become a trusted resource for patients seeking skilled, compassionate, and highly individualized neurological rehabilitation. Practice is dedicated not only to improving individual abilities, but also to empowering patients and families with education, confidence, and tools to maintain independence in daily life.

Key Complete Therapies - Comprehensive Care that Comes to You.
www.keycompletetherapies.com